THE ORTHODOX WORD

September - October 1974

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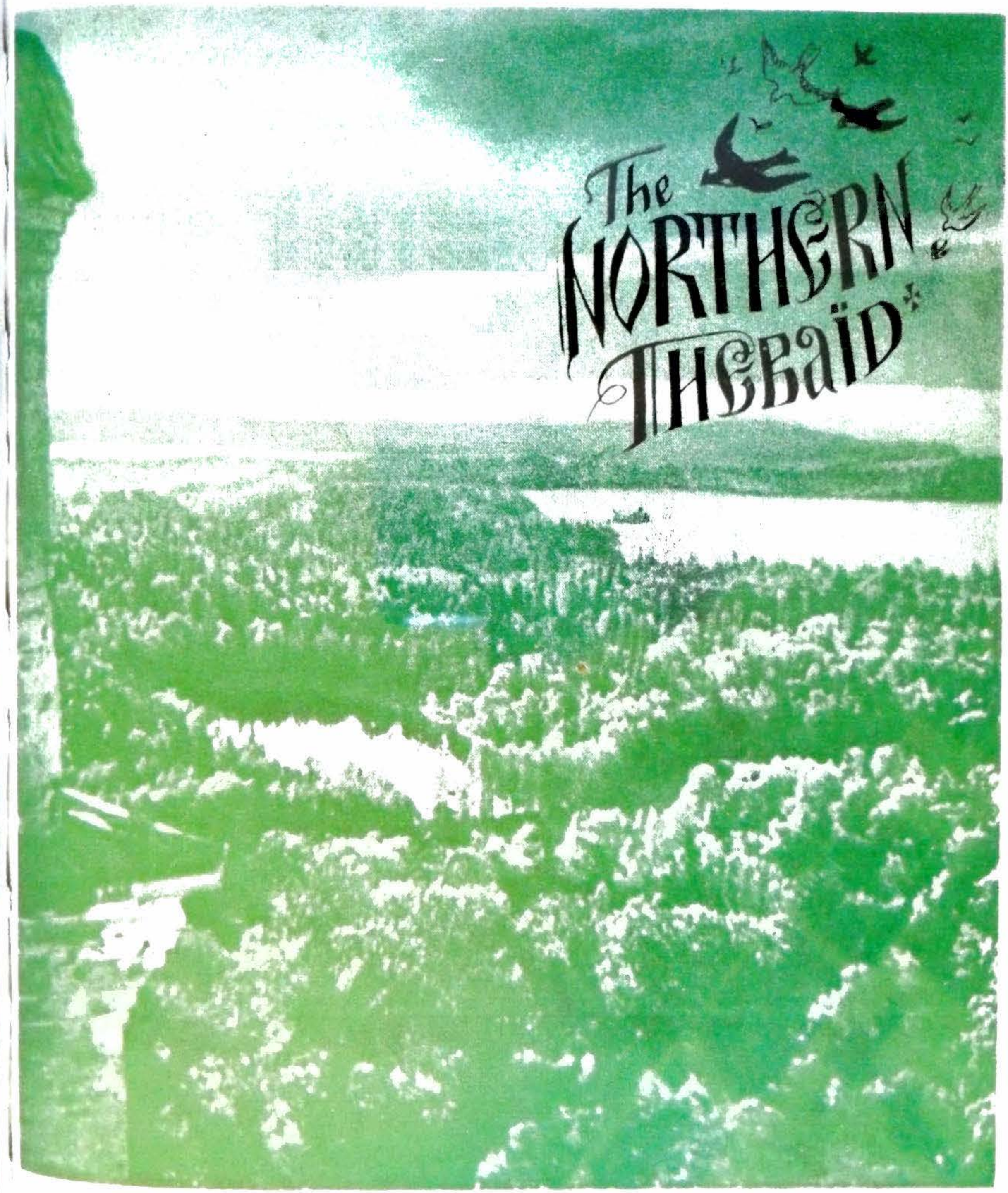

THE ORTHODOX WORD

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COVER: Aerial view of the wilds of Solovki Island, where the 17th-century ascetics labored, seen from the tower of the Golgotha Skete of the Blessed **Joshua** (†1720). Icon on page 173: Courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Guardian Angel

HOLY ANGEL OF CHRIST, my holy Guardian, given me from holy Baptism for the protection of my sinful body and soul, I fall down and pray to thee: Pity me, thy sinful and unworthy servant. Be my helper and protector against my wicked enemy, by thy holy prayers, and make me a partaker of the Kingdom of God with all the Saints, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

From the Canon to the Guardian Angel

THE LIFE OF

St. Diodorus of George-hill

AND THE DESERT-DWELLERS OF THE UTMOST NORTH*

Commemorated November 27

THE ONEGA RIVER territory, with its myriads of glassy lakes azurely reflecting the beautiful northern landscape, provided breadth and freedom for Holy Russia's seekers of God. This region of the Northern Thebaid, with city of Kargopol for its center, has adorned the Orthodox Church with great Saints. Some of the predecessors of St. Diodorus in this region in the 14th to 16th centuries were; St. Lazarus of Murom, the Greek who conversed with the Most Holy Mother of God; St. Cornelius of Paleh Lake, a monk of Valaam; St. Jonah of Klimenetz, the rich merchant who was converted to monasticism overnight; St. Cyril of Chelmogor; St. John the Hairy; St. Alexander of Oshevensk; and many others.

Our holy Father Diodorus was born near the end of the 16th century in the prosperous village of Turchasovo, which was located about half-way between Archangelsk and Kargopol, on the river Onega. Since all of Russia's foreign trade at that time went through the northern port of Archangelsk, whence foreign goods were transported south on the rivers to Moscow, the village of Turchasovo was an important trading center; but more significantly, it was also an important spiritual center, with beautiful churches and other edifaces which bore witness to the spiritual and cultural height of Holy Russia. The Saint's father was called Hierotheus, and his mother was Mary. In holy Baptism he received the name Diomedes. When he was fifteen years old, having received the blessing of his parents, he set out on a pilgrimage to Solovki Monastery; this occurred between the years 1600 and 1606. He never returned home. He came to love the monastery life and labored in the renowned monastery for three years, passing through various labors with complete obedience, without any contradiction or murmuring, for which he was beloved by all. With fear of God and humility Diomedes stood in the temple of God, listening to the sacred singing and reading. Most of all he preserved his body in chastity and avoided those among the brethren who were careless in this virtue. With his whole soul the young ascetic longed for the Angelic habit,

* Translated from the "Life of St. Diodorus of Yuriegorsk" (i.e., "George-hill"), in the *Lives of Saints,* Supplementary Vol. I, Moscow, 1908, pp. 423ff, with details added from the *Solovki Patericon,* St. Petersburg, 1873, pp. 74ff.

SAINT DIODORUS OF GEORGE-HILL

Troparion, Tone 1

O LOVER of those who dwell in the desert,* thou wast aflame with zeal to imitate their virtues.* And coming after many trials and sorrows to the barren desert,* thou didst water it with thy tears and make it fruitful in true strugglers of Christ.* Wherefore, we glorify thee, O holy Diodorus,* and call out in thanksgiving for the grace that was given thee:* Glory to Him Who granted thee strength in the wilderness,* glory to Him Who crowned thee for thy labors,* glory to Him Who worketh wonders through thy holy prayers.

Turchasovo Village, the home town of St. Diodorus

Two beautiful 17th-century churches of Turchasovo: at left, the Annunciation; at right, the Transfiguration.

and when he turned nineteen years old, he tearfully begged Abbot Anthony (1603-1612) to deem him worthy of the monastic tonsure. Seeing the humility and tears of the youth, the Abbot gave the blessing for him to be tonsured, and he was given the name Damian in monasticism. Then the newly-tonsured monk was given over to the spiritual direction of an elder experienced in the monastic life, Hieromonk Joseph, a native of Great Novgorod.

HIEROMONK JOSEPH was a great lover of the desert, that dwelling place of anchoretic monasticism, and not infrequently would he tell his young novice how that right there in the thickets of the forest of Solovki Island many desert-dwellers were still struggling, working out the salvation of their souls.

THE UNKNOWN ANCHORITE

There were then hermits on Solovki whose names are known to God alone. One monk of Solovki — to take an example that was recorded in the Solovki Patericon of this period — was going about the island on some monastery business; becoming fatigued, he wished to rest beside a steep hill. Intending to lie down on the ground, he crossed himself and pronounced aloud the Jesus Prayer. Suddenly from the top of the hill, from within a cleft, he heard "Amen." Not believing his ears, he pronounced the prayer a second and a third time, and again he heard the same "Amen." "Who are you, a man or a spirit?" asked the monk in astonishment. "I am a sinful man," answered the unseen one, "and I am weeping over my sins." "What is your name and how did you come here?" "My name and how I came here God alone knows." "Are you alone here?" "Near to me there live two elders. There was also a third one, but he departed to the Lord and we buried him." "And what do you live on?" "Remember. brother. the word of the Lord: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.* He nourishes and warms the inward man. Remember how in earlier times holy men and women dwelt in mountains, caves, and caverns of the earth. God the Creator fed them, and is He not the same God Who is now? If you wish to find out with what the Master feeds my corruptible body, take this." With these words he threw a piece of something, and the monk took it and ate it. It was dried moss with cranberries. "This is what my Master feeds me with," said the desert-dweller. The monk began to entreat him to tell him how many years he had been in this place and how he spent his time. "I have been here ten or more years," replied the anchorite. "The first year I suffered terribly from the fearsome spectacles of the demons. The demons, appearing in the form of robbers, frightened me, beat me mercilessly, dragged me out of my cell, and demanded that I go away from the

island or return to the monastery. Having tortured me, they left me hardly alive. Then two holy men with prosphora in their hands came to me. They said, 'Arise, brother, and signing yourself with the Sign of the Cross, say the Prayer of Jesus. Do not fear the snares of the enemies; have courage and be strengthened, and God will help you. Taste of this prosphora, and we will visit you.' No sooner had I tasted the prosphora than immediately I felt myself to be well and joyful. In the first year, when the demons especially attacked me, the elders often visited me, carried me into the hut and strengthened me. The second year, the attacks of the demons became weaker, and now, by the grace of Christ, I am out of danger from all the attacks of the enemy. But the elders sometimes visit me and bring prosphora and bread."

When the monk said farewell, the desert-dweller begged him to bring incense on a certain day. The monk promised, but he was unable to do this on the day designated, and later he was no longer able to find the desert-dweller. The next year, however, the monk again came to the same place where he had conversed with the desert-dweller, and, having labored much, he lay down to rest. In a vision during sleep the anchorite appeared to him and said. "Now you have come in vain," and gave him a prosphora.

At this same time. when the young Father Damian was listening to such accounts in the cell of his elder, there came to his spiritual father, Elder Joseph, a certain Basil of Keno Lake who loved to go away for solitude into deserted parts of the island; this Basil told of a meeting with the marvellous desert-dweller *Andrew*.

THE BLESSED ANDREW

"It once happened," he began his narrative, "that I went far away from the monastery and, having lost the road, I wandered lost without food or drink. Suddenly in the distance there appeared to me, as it were, the shadow of a man. I went towards it, and the shadow hid in the denseness of the forest. I continued to run and I saw a small path, and I went on it as far as a very dense thicket in which there was a narrow entrance just large enough for one man. Having gone through this entrance, I saw a mountain, and on it the footprints of a barefoot man. In the cliff there was a small opening. I prayed and then entered this dark cave. After making the Sign of the Cross, I stretched out my hands and felt a man, and in terror I said a prayer; to this the cave-dweller replied, 'Amen.' I fell at his feet. 'Why have you come here and what do you need?' the unknown one asked me. 'Forgive me, holy Father; I have become lost and thus came here. I entreat you, have pity on me and show me the way to the monastery.' The hermit brought me to a different cave in which, on the southern side, there was a window which lighted the interior. Then I examined the unknown one. He w s

naked, with a small beard, and his body was dark. In the cave there were four stumps; on them were placed two boards and two carved wooden bowls; in one of the bowls was water, and in the other, dried grass. The desert-dweller gave me the grass to eat and the water to drink. Having tasted what was offered, I felt life and strength return within me. Then I asked the elder to tell me of his life. He said, 'I was a laborer of this monastery of Solovki. My name is Andrew.' Thus he began his account. 'Having come to the monastery of Solovki, I labored in the salt-works, boiling the salt. At that time the abbot was Barlaam (1571-1581, later Metropolitan of Rostov). Soon the thought of my sins was aroused within me and the desire was born to leave everything and labor for God alone. I did not want to postpone this, so I went into the wilderness, found this dark cave, and settled in it. I suffered from hunger and thirst, I ate berries and mushrooms, and many times I endured the attacks of devils, beatings, insults, and afflictions. I fought with thoughts as with wild beasts. Many times I repented that I had gone into the wilderness, considering all my hermitic life fruitless. Often I even left the cave in order to go to the world, but thunder resounded from heaven, rain poured down, and I would be forced to return to the cave. Here a quiet coolness gave me repose. Sometimes I would come up out of the cave in the wintertime, but the frightful frost, which would have crushed all my bones, did not give me any possibility of going more than five steps. For three years this difficult battle continued. After a trial of three years I found peace, and all the unpleasant attacks ceased. Then there appeared to me a certain holy being who said, "Be firm, do not leave the path to God which has been indicated to you." He gave me this grass, saying, "Eat it, and drink water from this lake." So for 38 years I have eaten this grass.' Having heard this account, I fell at the feet of the elder, begging his prayers. Andrew brought me out of the cave, showed the way to the monastery, and having blessed me, said, 'Go in peace, and tell no one about what you have heard from me while I am alive.' I went, and it seemed to me that it was no more than half a mile to the monastery." Thus Basil concluded his wondrous narrative.

The account of Basil sank deeply into the soul of Damian. After some time, Basil set out to seek the cave of Andrew, and Damian accompanied him. But having spent a whole week in the search, they found neither that dense forested place, nor the mountain, nor the cave.

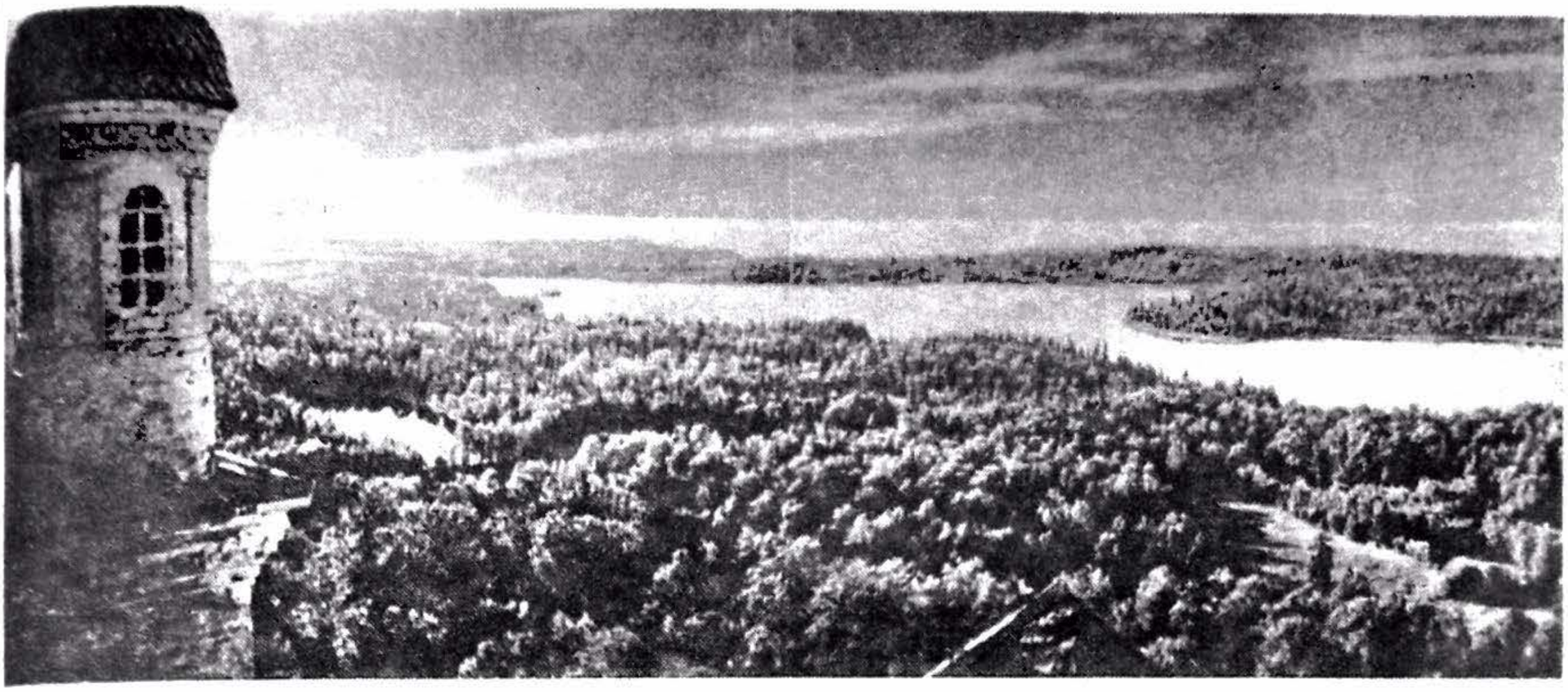
SUCH ACCOUNTS AS THESE kindled in the young monk the ardent desire to settle in the forest with the desert-dwellers and to imitate their struggles. He ceaselessly thought only about this, but, nevertheless, he diligently fulfilled all the difficult monastic obediences that were laid upon him in the bakery and the kitchen. Then, one day, while he was working with the breth-

ren in the bakery, the Saint looked out at the lake which is located right next to the monastery, on the east side, and exclaimed: "Look, brethren; a desert-dweller is walking on the water as if on dry land." The brethren looked, but saw nothing. The Saint thirsted for hermitic life, but he continued to work in the place where kvas was made, laboring very hard, giving no rest to himself, and fervently praying to the Lord both in church and in his cell.

Many years did Damian struggle thus in the monastery, until his own father, Hierotheus, came to him, to the Saint's great joy; having received the monastic tonsure, he remained in the monastery until his death. The Saint buried his father with his own hands. After his father's death, the Saint was again inflamed with the desire to leave the noisy monastery and go into the desert in order to lead in silence there the difficult life of an anchorite. This time he went out from the monastery deep into the island seeking desert-dwellers there so as to be edified by their converse, and even hoping to live together with them. For forty days he walked about the island, eating only grass and dew, but he found no one. He became faint from hunger, and finally, scarcely breathing, he lay down under a tree. Here his brethren from the monastery found him, having come so far to gather plants and berries. They took the Saint for dead, placed him on a stretcher of sorts, brought him to the monastery building which was in this area, and called his spiritual father to him. "What has happened to you, Damian?" asked the elder. Damian could scarcely answer: "Forgive me, Father; from the time when I left the monastery I have not seen bread, and have lived only on grass." The brethren thus understood what had happened and gave him bread and kvas, and Damian thus recovered.

This unfortunate incident did not keep the Saint from fulfilling his cherished desire; soon he set out anew and settled in a deserted cell which had been abandoned by some unknown hermit. Later, when the Saint succeeded in meeting two anchorites and conversing with them, he came to love the hermitic life still more. Now he built a hut for himself in the forest and lived in it, laboring during the day and spending the night in prayer.

But his earlier thought to visit all the anchorites of the island, all the unknown strugglers and true slaves of God who were concealed from the eyes of men in the forest thickets, did not leave the Saint. Having prayed to the Lord and the Wonderworkers of Solovki, Sts. Sabbatius and Zossimas, for the fulfillment of his cherished desire, Damian began to walk throughout the desert. And the Lord did not disdain the prayers of His servant. He deemed him worthy to see a multitude of anchorites — monks and laymen who were



View of the Solovki islands wilderness, the desert haven of the Northern Thebaid's severest ascetics, as seen from the hill of the Golgotha Skete, with the Arctic Sea on the horizon

A typical desert-dweller's hut, made of grass and branches, during summer.

Golgotha Skete in the Solovki forest during winter

THE HOLY MONASTERY OF SOLOVKI

A 17th-century illustrated title page for the Life of Sts. Sabbatius and Zossimas, produced in the Solovki calligraphy workshop. This type of publication was very popular in St. Diodorus' youth and spread the monastic ideal.

working out their salvation on Anzersk, Solovki, and other islands. Desiring to help them in their labors, the Saint began often to go to the monastery and bring back food for them, and by his visits he brought them much consolation. He buried those who had died.

THE BLESSED NICEPHORUS

Once during winter he met in the desert the anchorite Nicephorus, a layman from Novgorod. The anchorite was completely naked. Turning to the Saint, he said: 'Keep visiting, Damian, keep visiting, so that God will visit you also.' And he ran away. The Saint wanted to converse with the hermit, but he could not overtake him. Nicephorus was a great holy man, the son of a priest of Novgorod. He had come to the monastery of Solovki when he was still young, and he had grown to love monastic life. He entreated the Superior to tonsure him, but because he was young and handsome, his desire was put off. This refusal only increased in the youth his zeal for monastic life. Together with some pilgrims from Novgorod he received a letter from his parents, in which they called him to return quickly home. "Tell my parents," he replied to those who gave him the letter, "that they will no longer see me in this life; we will meet there beyond the grave." Nicephorus continued to labor for the monastery together with others, observing a strict fast. He never lay down to sleep, but rested a little sitting up. In his free time he loved to read the Life of St. Mark the Anchorite of Thrace.* The image of this early desert-dweller was deeply impressed on him and drew him to the anchoretic life. Once, in front of everyone, Nicephorus jumped up from his chair, signed himself with the Sign of the Cross, took off his belt, his sandals, and a single gray shirt, and fled into the forest, remaining in the desert, on the island of Solovki, for twelve years, in fasting, prayer, and prostrations. Then a certain desert-dweller tonsured him. Spending three more years in monastic labors, he died in 1605, on Palm Sunday.

THE BLESSED TIMOTHY

Another time Damian visited a still more perfect anchorite, was deemed worthy of conversations with him, and found out who he was. His name was Timothy, and he was a native of Aleksin in the Tula region. He left his parents' home and fled to the desert during the Time of Troubles, in the reign of the Pretender Demetrius. Seeing the strife and disorder in the Moscow Government, he left the cities behind and set out in a small boat from Archangelsk on the Arctic Sea. Reaching the desert of Solovki, he built

* For this Life, see *The Orthodox Word,* 1966, no. 1.

a hut for himself and settled in it. For three years Timothy endured hunger and difficult temptations, until a radiant heavenly elder appeared to him and showed him the grass he should eat and the water he should drink. Inspired by his life, Damian decided definitely to settle in the desert, living with Nicephorus and Timothy. "Slave of Christ," said the Saint to Timothy, "pray God that He might deem me also worthy of living together with you both, that He might strengthen our life together and help me to bear this most difficult struggle for the salvation of my soul."

Now the Saint began often to go to both the anchorites; he would bring them all necessities, entreat and exhort them to continue their lofty labor, and comfort them in their sorrows; he himself promised to keep the monastic vow even unto death, and without fail to dwell in the desert. His example inspired others to imitate him.

THE BLESSED EPHRAIM AND OTHERS

In the Life of St. Diodorus the following hermits whom the Saint met are also mentioned: the elder *Ephraim* the dark, then *Alexius* of Kaluga, *Joseph* and *Tikhon* of Moscow, *Theodulus* of Ryazan, *Porphyrius, Tryphon, Joseph the Younger, Sebastian,* and many others. With heartfelt love Damian attached himself to them and began frequently to visit them and bring them what they needed from the monastery.

Besides these desert-dwellers whom St. Diodorus knew in the wild forests of the island of Solovki, tradition names many other ascetics who sought salvation there in the 17th century in a life of the strictest silence. Among these was *Adrian,* who lived near the lake in the very center of the island, a mile and a half from the cell built by Abbot Irenarchus, and who led here a strict ascetic life. Here he died and was buried in the desert. The layman *Sabbas,* who was one of the monastery's laborers, went away into the forest on Solovki Island and labored for eleven years, known only to God. He died during the abbacy of Raphael and was buried near the cell of Damian. Near the cell of Sabbas, the monk *Nestor* lived as a hermit, laboring day and night in prayer and fasting. When he died he also was buried near the desert of Damian.*

NOW THE BRETHREN of Solovki Monastery began to murmur against Damian, who received the Schema with the name Diodorus about this time. They said: "He is disrupting the monastery and building up the desert with the monastery's property. The desert is filling up with brethren

* There exists a whole Solovki Patericon of this period, published in the 17th century, republished in the 19th, but it was not available to the editors.

whom he is leading away from the monastery; now they no longer labor for the monastery, and others also are deceived. If now we shall indulge him, he will seduce many and bring much harm to the monastery.

At this time the cellarer Cyricus went out from the monastery to the desert of St. Diodorus, and thereby the brethren of the infirmary were offended. With tears they begged their abbot, St. Irenarchus,* to command that Cyricus be brought back from the desert, together with the anchorite Diodorus. "Cyricus has saddened us by his departure," they told the abbot, "because no one is able to comfort us as well as he. We are saddened now."

Hearing this complaint, the abbot and all the Solovki brethren were greatly angered at St. Diodorus. They sent some of the monastery workers to search for the Saint and other anchorites. They found them, seized them, and brought them to the monastery like criminals, after destroying their cells. St. Diodorus, as the chief evil-doer, was brought bound. All the hermits were ordered to live in the monastery, and the Saint was placed in irons and thrown into the infirmary. Here he remained for five and a half months in strict confinement, not having the possibility to go out either to church or to the brethren. Finally, having been freed from bonds by God's mercy, the Saint secretly left the monastery, this time for the last time, and went away to his former desert. All the cells and habitations of the hermits had been destroyed; the Saint saw this and lamented, praying with tears: "O merciful Lord, O Master, Lover of mankind! If this be pleasing to Thee, may Thy will be done!"

For a long time the brethren of Solovki Monastery diligently sought St. Diodorus, but they could not find him, for the Lord covered His servant. For six months the Saint abode in the desert and unceasingly entreated the Lord and the Solovki Saints that he might find a more suitable and safe place for the life of silence. It seems that only one of the Solovki brethren knew the place of St. Diodorus' desert solitude — his own brother, who sometimes visited the hermit. Once he came to the cell of his brother; having received no answer to his prayerful greeting, he entered the cell and saw

* St. Irenarchus of Solovki, abbot from 1613-1626; commemorated July 17. A great wonderworker and a lover of the desert himself (spending the last two years of his life in silence alone in the forest), he blessed his close disciple St. Eleazar to establish a skete on Anzersk Island. Many anchorites settled there under St. Eleazar's guidance, thus avoiding the temptations which sometimes occurred when hermits lived without sufficient spiritual direction. St. Eleazar of Solovki (†1656, January 13), one of the greatest Saints of the Northern Thebaid, was deemed worthy to converse with the Most Holy Theotokos Herself.

the Saint lying unconscious on the ground, greatly swollen. The Saint explained that he had been beaten by demons.

After this, St. Diodorus decided to leave in order to struggle in another place. He sailed across the sea in a boat, and coming out on the shore at the mouth of the river Onega, he gave thanks to the Lord, Who had helped him to row safely across the depths of the sea. From there he rowed south upstream, seeking a place in which to settle. And so he came to his native territory and passed his home town Turchasovo, which towered over the beautiful wide river. Round about was a vast, still deserted wilderness, ideally suited for desert-dwelling. He rowed further along the familiar banks, searching and praying. The Saint liked very much a certain deserted place on the river Kena just before one reaches Keno Lake, and he decided to settle there. Having prayed, he set up a Cross, felled trees for a cell, and gave himself over to his usual struggles, adding labor to labor, offering to the Lord the sweet-smelling incense of his prayers. But here also trials were in store for the zealous hermit. Near this place the peasants trapped animals. Upon encountering the Saint, they beat him mercilessly, burned his cell and boat, mocked him, dragged him by his feet, and left him barely alive, yelling at him: "Why have you settled here? Surely you wish now to establish a monastery? You are scheming to take away our land and our fishing rights. If you do not leave this place, we will kill you."

The Saint left, praying to the Lord for his offenders. Then, coming to the river Onega, he approached the bank and stood at prayer, as was his custom. It happened that at this very time the wealthy Moscow merchant, Nadeya Svetechnikov, arrived at this place in a carriage. On seeing the Elder, he bowed down to him and asked who he was and where he was from. "I am a wandering beggar," the Saint humbly answered. When the merchant questioned him persistently, St. Diodorus told him of his misfortunes. The merchant became angry at the peasants, felt sorry for the Saint, who had been injured unjustly, and said to him: "I shall inform the Tsar about all this, and he will take vengeance on your offenders." But the Elder did not desire this and entreated his defender: "No, my lord, do not do this; do not inform the Tsar." The merchant promised to do the will of the meek Elder, but on arriving at the village of Keno Lake, he told the local magistrate about the settlers who had beaten the holy man and threatened to inform on them. The guilty men became frightened; they sought out the Saint and, falling down at his feet, begged him to return to his previous place, agreeing to build a cell for him and to comfort him in everything.

But St. Diodorus withdrew from them to Zabodly Lake and found there a desert place called George-hill, on Lake George. This place was exceptionally beautiful and seemed to the Saint to be suitable for anchoretic life. And the hermit rejoiced, gave thanks to the Lord, erected a Cross, built a cell, and gave himself over to his usual desert struggles, labor, and prayer.

For seven years St. Diodorus struggled here completely alone; and then a certain monk Prochorus came to him. He saw the Saint's labors, was amazed at his supernatural life, and remained to live with him. Many times the two hermits heard the ringing of bells at that place, and the laymen who came there also heard the ringing and told the holy Elder about it. The Saint glorified the Lord for this. And then once a resplendent man appeared to him and said: "It is pleasing to the Lord that at this place a temple be built in the name of the Life-giving Trinity, another in the name of the honorable and glorious Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos, and a third in the name of Sts. Zossimas and Sabbatius, the Wonderworkers of Solovki; brethren will gather here and the community will increase."

But the Saint was not thinking about making a monastery, and so he did not attach any special significance to this vision. When the vision was repeated, together with the heavenly command, St. Diodorus began to take counsel with Prochorus and said to his co-dweller: "I am perplexed as to how I can build a cœnobitic monastery with three temples, when I do not have a single copper coin." When the Elder was thus wondering and was in perplexity about this, the following night the resplendent man appeared to him a third time and said: "Why do you wonder in your heart, and why are you perplexed? Are you worried that you have nothing? Understand that God's judgments are unsearchable, and that with God all things are possible. Now do not think about anything." Later this radiant man sent the Saint to Moscow to see the cellarer of the Holy Trinity Lavra, commanding him to tell the latter all that had happened; he promised that the cellarer would build the monastery, and that other builders would be found as well. "And do not be disobedient," said the holy man who had appeared to the Saint, "and do not bring down upon yourself the wrath of God." Upon saying this, he became invisible. That very night the Saint decided to go to Moscow. He told Prochorus about his decision, asked him to remain until his return, and with prayer he set off on the long journey.

St. Diodorus came to the St. Sergius-Holy Trinity Lavra and prayed before the relics of Sts. Sergius and Nikon, Wonderworkers of Radonezh; but he did not find the cellarer, Alexander Bulatnikov, in the Lavra, since at that time he was in Moscow. The Saint hastened to Moscow, prayed at its holy places, and found the cellarer Alexander. The cellarer told the pious

(*Continued on page* 208)

THE HOLY FATHERS of Orthodox Spirituality

Remember your instructors, who have spoken the word of God to you; whose faith follow, considering the end of their life... Be not led away with various and strange doctrines.
Hebrews 13:7, 9

INTRODUCTION

I. THE INSPIRATION AND SURE GUIDE TO TRUE CHRISTIANITY TODAY

NEVER HAS THERE BEEN such an age of false teachers as this pitiful 20th century, so rich in material gadjets and so poor in mind and soul. Every conceivable opinion, even the most absurd, even those hitherto rejected by the universal consent of all civilized peoples — now has its platform and its own "teacher." A few of these teachers come with demonstration or promise of "spiritual power" and false miracles, as do some occultists and "charismatics"; but most of the contemporary teachers offer no more than a weak concoction of undigested ideas which they received "out of the air," as it were, or from some modern self-appointed "wise man" (or woman) who knows more than all the ancients merely by living in our "enlightened" modern times. As a result, philosophy has a thousand schools, and "Christianity" a thousand sects. Where is the truth to be found in all this, if indeed it is to be found at all in our most misguided times?

In only one place is there to be found the fount of true teaching, coming from God Himself, not diminished over the centuries but ever fresh, being one and the same in all those who truly teach it, leading those who follow it to eternal salvation. This place is the Orthodox Church of Christ, the fount is the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, and the true teachers of the Divine doctrine that issues from this fount are the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church.

Alas! How few Orthodox Christians know this, and know enough to drink from this fount! How many contemporary hierarchs lead their flocks, not on the true pastures of the soul, the Holy Fathers, but along the ruinous paths of modern wise men who promise something "new" and strive only to make Christians forget the true teaching of the Holy Fathers, a teaching which—it is quite true—is entirely out of harmony with the false ideas which govern modern times.

The Orthodox teaching of the Holy Fathers is not something of one age, whether "ancient" or "modern." It has been transmitted in unbroken succession from the time of Christ and His Apostles to the present day, and there has never been a time when

Sts. Gregory Palamas, Photius the Great, Mark of Ephesus, Nicodemus of Mt. Athos

it was necessary to discover a "lost" patristic teaching. Even when many Orthodox Christians may have neglected this teaching (as is the case, for example, in our own day), its true representatives were still handing it down to those who hungered to receive it. There have been great patristic ages, such as the dazzling epoch of the fourth century, and there have been periods of decline in patristic awareness among Orthodox Christians; but there has been no period since the very foundation of Christ's Church on earth when the patristic tradition was not guiding the Church; there has been no century without Holy Fathers of its own. St. Nicetas Stethatos, disciple and biographer of St. Simeon the New Theologian, has written; "It has been granted by God that from generation to generation there should not cease the preparation by the Holy Spirit of His prophets and friends for the order of His Church."

Most instructive is it for us, the last Christians, to take guidance and inspiration from the Holy Fathers of our own and recent times, those who lived in conditions similar to our own and yet kept undamaged and unchanged the same ever-fresh teaching, which is not for one time or race, but for all times to the end of the world, and for the whole race of Orthodox Christians.

Before looking at two of the recent Holy Fathers, however, let us make clear that for us, Orthodox Christians, the study of the Holy Fathers is not an idle academic exercise. Much of what passes for a "patristic revival" in our times is scarcely more than a plaything of heterodox scholars and their "Orthodox" imitators, not one of whom has ever "discovered" a patristic truth for which he was ready to sacrifice his life. Such "patrology" is only rationalist scholarship which happens to take patristic teaching for its subject, without ever understanding that the genuine teaching of the Holy Fathers contains the truths on which our spiritual life or death depends.

Such pseudo-patristic scholars spend their time proving that "pseudo-Macarius" was a Messalian heretic, without understanding or practicing the pure Orthodox teaching of the true St. Macarius the Great; that "'pseudo-Dionysius" was a calculated forger of books whose mystical and spiritual depths are totally beyond his accusers; that the thoroughly Christian and monastic life of Sts. Barlaam and Joasaph, handed down by St. John Damascene. is nothing but a "retelling of the Buddha story"; and a hundred similar fables manufactured by "experts" for a gullible public which has no idea of the agnostic atmosphere in which such "discoveries" are made. Where there are serious scholarly questions concerning some patristic texts (which, of course, there are), they will certainly *not* be resolved by referring them to such "experts," who are total strangers to the true patristic tradition, and only make their living at its expense.

When "Orthodox" scholars pick up the teaching of these pseudo-patristic scholars or make their own researches in the same rationalistic spirit, the outcome can be tragic; for such scholars are taken by many to be "spokesmen for Orthodoxy," and their rationalistic pronouncements to be part of an "authentically patristic" outlook, thus deceiving many Orthodox Christians. Father Alexander Schmemann, for example, while pretending to set himself free from the "Western captivity" which, in his ignorance of the true patristic tradition of recent centuries (which is to be found more in the monasteries than in the academies), he fancies to have completely dominated Orthodox theology in modern times, has himself become the captive of Protestant rationalistic ideas concerning liturgical theology, as has been well pointed out by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, a genuine patristic theologian of today.† Unfortunately, such a clear unmasking has yet to be made of the pseudo-scholar of Russian Saints and Holy Fathers, G. P. Fedotov, who imagines that St. Sergius "was the first Russian saint who can be termed a mystic" (thereby ignoring the four centuries of equally "mystical" Russian Fathers who preceded him), looks pointlessly for "originality" in the "literary work" of St. Nilus of Sora (thus showing that he does not even understand the meaning of tradition in Orthodoxy), slanders the great Orthodox Saint, Tikhon of Zadonsk, as "the son of the Western Baroque rather than the heir of Eastern spirituality,"* and with great artificiality tries to make St. Seraphim (who is actually so stunningly in the patristic tradition that he is scarcely to be distinguished from the great Fathers of the Egyptian desert) into some "uniquely Russian" phenomenon who was "the first known representative of this class of spiritual elders (startsi) in Russia," whose "approach to the world is unprecedented in the Eastern tradition." and who was "the fore-

† "The Liturgical Theology of Fr. A. Schmemann," in *The Orthodox Word,* 1970, nc. 6, pp. 260-280.

* A thesis thoroughly refuted by Nadejda Gorodetsky in *Saint Tikhon Zadonsky, Inspirer of Dostoyevsky,* SPCK, London, 1951.

runner of the new form of spirituality which should succeed merely ascetical monasticism."**

Lamentably, the consequences of such pseudo-scholarship often appear in real life; gullible souls who take these false conclusions for genuine begin to work for a "liturgical revival" on Protestant foundations, transform St. Seraphim (ignoring his "inconvenient" teachings regarding heretics, which he shares with the whole patristic tradition) into a Hindu yogin or a "charismatic," and in general approach the Holy Fathers just as do most contemporary scholars — without reverence and awe, as though they were on the same level, as an exercise in esotericism or as some kind of intellectual game, instead of as a guide to true life and salvation.

NOT SO ARE TRUE Orthodox scholars; not so is the true Orthodox patristic tradition, where the genuine, unchanging teaching of true Christianity is handed down in unbroken succession both orally and by the written and printed word, from spiritual father to spiritual son, from teacher to disciple.

In the 20th century one Orthodox hierarch stands out especially for his patristic orientation — Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava (†1940, February 6), one of the founders of the free Russian Church Outside of Russia, and perhaps the chief architect of her uncompromising and traditionalist ideology. In the years when he was vice-chairman of the Synod of Bishops of this Church (1920's), he was widely acknowledged as the most patristically-minded of all the Russian theologians abroad. In the 1930's he retired into total seclusion to become a second Theophanes the Recluse; and since then he has been, sadly, very largely forgotten. Fortunately, his memory has been sacredly kept by his disciples and followers, and in recent months one of his leading disciples, Archbishop Averky of Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York, has published his biography together with a number of his sermons.* In these sermons may be clearly seen the hierarch's awe and reverence before the Holy Fathers, his discipleship toward them, and his surpassing humility which will be content only when he is transmitting nothing of his own but only the ideas and the very words of the Holy Fathers. Thus, in a sermon on Pentecost Sunday he says: "The teaching of the Holy Trinity is the pinnacle of Christian theology. Therefore I do not presume to set forth this teaching in my own words, but I set it forth in the words of the holy and God-bearing theologians and great Fathers of the Church: Athanasius the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Basil the Great. Mine only are the lips, but theirs the words and thoughts. They present the Divine meal, and I am only the servant of their Divine banquet."

** See Fedotov's introductions to the writings of these Saints in *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality,* Sheed & Ward, New York, 1948.

* A brief life of him in English may be read in *The Orthodox Word,* 1969, no. 5.

In another sermon, Archbishop Theophanes gives the reasons for his self-effacement before the Holy Fathers — a characteristic so typical of the great transmitters of patristic teaching, even great theologians in their own right such as Archbishop Theophanes, but which is so glaringly misinterpreted by worldly scholars as a "lack of originality." In his sermon on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, given in 1928 in Varna, Bulgaria, he offers to the faithful "a word on the significance of the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church for us Christians. In what does their greatness consist, and on what does their special significance for us depend? The Church, brethren, is *the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth* (I Tim. 3:15). Christian truth is preserved in the Church in Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition; but it requires a correct preservation and a correct interpretation. The significance of the Holy Fathers is to be found precisely in this: that they are the most capable preservers and interpreters of this truth by virtue of the sanctity of their lives, their profound knowledge of the word of God, and the abundance of the grace of the Holy Spirit which dwells in them." The rest of this sermon is composed of nothing but quotes from the Holy Fathers themselves (Sts. Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Simeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos) to support this view.

The final Holy Father whom Archbishop Theophanes quotes, at great length, in his sermon, is one close to him in time, a predecessor of his in the transmission of the authentic patristic tradition in Russia — Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov. He has a double significance for us today: not only is he a Holy Father of almost our own times, but also his search for truth is very similar to that of sincere truth-seekers today, and he thus shows us how it is possible for the "enlightened modern man" to turn away from the prevailing slavery to modern ideas and modes of thought, and enter once again the pure atmosphere of patristic — that is, true Orthodox Christian — ideas and ways of thinking. It is extremely inspiring for us to read, in the words of Bishop Ignatius himself, how a military engineer burst the bonds of "modern knowledge" and entered the patristic tradition, which he received, in addition to books, directly from a disciple of Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, and handed down to our own day.

"When I was still a student," Archbishop Theophanes quotes Bishop Ignatius,* "there were no enjoyments or distractions for me! The world presented nothing enticing for me. My mind was entirely immersed in the sciences, and at the same time I was burning with the desire to find out where was the true faith, where was the true teaching of it, foreign to errors both dogmatic and moral.

"At the same time there was already presented to my gaze the boundaries of human knowledge in the highest, fully developed sciences. Coming to these boundaries, I asked of the sciences: 'What do you give that a man may call his own? Man is eternal, and what is his own should be eternal. Show me this eternal possession, this true wealth, which I might take with me beyond the grave! Up to now I see only

* From Volume I of Bishop Ignatius' Collected Works in Russian, pp. 396-401.

knowledge which ends with the earth, which cannot exist after thı separation of the soul from the body."

The searching youth inquired in turn of mathematics, physics, chemistry, philosophy, showing his profound knowledge of them; then of geography, geodesy, languages, literature; but he finds that they are all of the earth. In answer to all his agonized questioning he received the same reply similar searchers receive in our even more "enlightened" 20th century: "The sciences were silent."

Then, "for a satisfactory answer, a truly necessary and living answer, I turned to faith. But where are you hidden, O true and holy Faith? I could not recognize you ın fanaticism [Papism] which was not sealed with the Gospel meekness; it breathed passion and high-mindedness! I could not recognize you in the arbitrary teaching [Protestantism] which separated from the Church, making up its own new system, vainly and pridefully proclaiming the discovery of a new, true Christian faith, after a lapse of eighteen centuries from the Incarnation of God the Word! Oh! In what a heavy perplexity my soul was! How frightfullY it was weighed down! What waves of doubt rose up against it, arising from distrust of myself, from distrust of everything that was clamoring, crying out around me because of my lack of knowledge, my ignorance of the truth.

"And I began often, with tears, to implore God that He might not give me over as a sacrifice to error, but that He might show me the right path on which I should direct towards Him my invisible journey of mind and heart. And, O wonder! Suddenly a thought stood before me... My heart went out to it as to The embrace of a friend. This thought inspired me to study faith in the sources — in the writings of the Holy Fathers! 'Their holiness,' the thought said to me, 'vouches for their trustworthiness: choose them for your guides.' I obeyed. I found means of obtaining the works of the holy pleasers of God, and in eagerness I began to read them, investigate them deeply. Having read some, I would take up others, read them, re-read them, study them. What was it that above all else struck me in The works of The Fathers of the Orthodox Church? It was their harmony, their wondrous, magnificent harmony. Eighteen centuries, through their lips, testified to a single unanimous Teaching, a Divine teaching!

"When on a clear autumn night I gaze at the clear sky, sown with numberless stars, so diverse in size yet shedding a single light, then I say to myself: such are the writings of the Fathers! When on a summer day I gaze at the vast sea, covered with a multitude of diverse vessels with their unfurled sails like white swans' wings, vessels racing under a single wind to a single goal, to a single harbor, I say to myself: such are the writings of the Fathers! When I hear a harmonious, many-voiced choir, in which diverse voices in elegant harmony sing a single Divine song, then I say to myself: such are the writings of the Fathers!

"And what teaching do I find in them? I find a teaching repeated by all the Fathers, namely, that the only path to salvation is the unwavering following of The

instructions of the Holy Fathers. 'Have you seen,' they say, 'anyone deceived by false teaching, perishing from an incorrect choice of ascetic labors? — then know that he followed himself, his own understanding, his own opinions, and not the teaching of the Fathers' (Abba Dorotheus, Fifth Instruction), out of which is composed the dogmatic and moral tradition of the Church. With this Tradition as a priceless possession, the Church nourishes her children.

"This thought was sent by God, from Whom is every good gift, from Whom a good thought is the beginning of every good thing... This thought was for me the first harbor in the land of truth. Here my soul found rest from the waves and winds. This thought became the foundation stone for the spiritual building of my soul. This thought became my guiding star. It began constantly to illumine for me the very difficult and much-suffering, narrow, invisible path of the mind and heart toward God. I looked at the religious world with this thought, and I saw: the cause of all errors consists in ignorance, in forgetfulness, in the absence of this thought.

"The reading of the Fathers clearly convinced me that salvation in the bosom of the Orthodox Russian Church was undoubted, something of which the religions of Western Europe are deprived, since they have not preserved whole either the dogmatic or the moral teaching of the Church of Christ from her beginning. It revealed to me what Christ has done for mankind, in what consists the fall of man, why a Redeemer was necessary, in what consists the salvation procured by the Redeemer. It inculcated in me that one must develop, sense, see salvation in oneself, without which faith in Christ is dead, and Christianity is a word and a name without being put into effect! It instructed me to look upon eternity as eternity, before which a Thousand years of earthly life is nothing, let alone our life which is measured by some half a century. It instructed me that earthly life must lead to preparation for eternity... It showed me that all earthly occupations, enjoyments, honors, pre-eminence — are empty toys, with which grown-up children play and in which they lose the blessedness of eternity... All this the Holy Fathers set forth with complete clarity in their sacredly splendid writings.'

Archbishop Theophanes concludes his patristic exhortation with this appeal: "Brethren, let this good thought [the taking of the Holy Fathers as our guide] be your guiding star also in the days of your earthly pilgrimage on the waves of the sea of life!"

The truth of this appeal, as of the inspired words of Bishop Ignatius, has not dimmed in the decades since they were uttered. The world has gone forth on the path of apostasy from Christian Truth, and it becomes ever more clear that there is no alternative to this path save that of following the uncompromising path of truth which the Holy Fathers have handed down to us.

Yet we must go to the Holy Fathers not merely to "learn about them"; if we do no more than this we are in no better state than the idle disputants of The dead academies of this perishing modern civilization, even when these academies are "Orthodox" and the learned theologians in them neatly define and explain all about "sanc-

tity" and "spirituality" and "theosis," but have not the experience needed to speak straight to the heart of thirsting souls and wound them into desiring the path of spiritual struggle, nor the knowledge to detect the fatal error of the academic "theologians" who speak of God with cigarette or wineglass in hand, nor the courage to accuse the apostate "canonical" hierarchs of their betrayal of Christ. We must go to the Holy Fathers, rather, *in order to become their disciples,* to receive the teaching of true life, the soul's salvation, even while knowing that by doing this we shall lose the favor of this world and become outcasts from it. If we do this we shall find the way out of the confused swamp of modern thought, which is based precisely upon abandonment of the sacred teaching of the Fathers. We shall find that the Holy Fathers are most "contemporary" in that they speak directly to the struggle of the Orthodox Christian today, giving answers to the crucial questions of life and death which mere academic scholarship is usually afraid even to ask — and when it does ask them, gives a harmless answer which "explains" these questions to those who are merely curious about them, but are not thirsting for answers. We shall find true guidance from the Fathers, learning humility and distrust of our own vain worldly wisdom, which we have sucked in with the air of these pestilential times, by means of trusting those who have pleased God and not the world. We shall find in them true *fathers,* so lacking in our own day when the love of many has grown cold (Matt. 24:12) — fathers whose only aim is to lead us their children to God and His Heavenly Kingdom, where we shall walk and converse with these angelic men in unutterable joy forever.

There is no problem of our own confused times which cannot find its solution by a careful and reverent reading of the Holy Fathers: whether the problem of the sects and heresies that abound today, or the schisms and "jurisdictions"; whether the pretense of spiritual life put forth by the "charismatic revival," or the subtle temptations of modern comfort and convenience; whether complex philosophical questions such as "evolution," or the straightforward moral questions of abortion, euthanasia, and "birth control"; whether the refined apostasy of "Sergianism," which offers a church organization in place of the Body of Christ, or the crudeness of "renovationism," which begins by "revising the calendar" and ends in "Eastern-rite Protestantism." In all these questions the Holy Fathers, and our living Fathers who follow them, are our only sure guide.

Bishop Ignatius and other recent Fathers have indicated for us last Christians which Holy Fathers are the most important for us to read, and in what order. These indications will be given together with the teaching of the Holy Fathers, and information on English translations of the Fathers, in future issues of *The Orthodox Word.* May this be an inspiration to us all to place the patristic teaching as the foundation stone of the building of our own souls, unto the inheritance of everlasting life! Amen.

Next: Introduction, II: How to Read the Holy Fathers.

The TYPICON of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services

CHAPTER FIVE
FEAST DAYS AND "ORDINARY" DAYS

IN THE PRESENT PRACTICE of the Orthodox Church, most Orthodox Christians seldom attend Divine services except on feast days: Sundays, Pascha, the Twelve Great Feasts, the feasts of great Saints. Few parishes even have services on any but these days, except during Great Lent, when the services have a special character which requires a separate description. Thus it is that few Orthodox Christians really have an understanding of what constitutes a "feast day" in the Divine services: that is, how it is distinct from the daily services which were once performed in all or most Orthodox churches, and are still performed in Orthodox monasteries. A basic knowledge of this distinction will not only give one a better awareness and appreciation of what happens in the Divine services and what its meaning is, but also -- more importantly — will give one an important clue as to how one should *feel* on feast days, in what state one's soul should be then, how one should attune oneself to this particular moment of the life of Christ's Church on earth, whose heartbeat one can feel in the Divine services. This distinction relates as much to the non-rational (singing, incense, light) as to the rational (number and content of stichera or hymns) side of the church services.

Chapter 47 of the Typicon gives, very briefly, the distinguishing characteristics of six kinds of Divine services, divided into three classes. It is characteristic of the "non-scholastic" nature of Orthodoxy in general that not only are these kinds of services not systematically "classified," as are the feasts of Roman Catholicism ("First Class, Second Class," etc.), but also they do not even have any proper names. Rather, the distinction of kind is indicated in the Typicon by signs which are named quite simply as follows.

Greater Feasts:

(Red) Cross in a circle.

Intermediate Feasts:

(Red) Cross in a semi-circle.

(Red) Cross alone.

Lesser Feasts:

(Red) Three dots not completely enclosed.

(Black) Three dots not completely enclosed.

No sign.

The chief differences in the Divine services between feast days and "ordinary" days (which is to say, "lesser feasts," because the Typicon actually does not recognize anything except "feast days"; every day is a feast day, the celebration of the memory of a martyr or other saint or sacred event), are to be found in the Vespers and Matins; whereas Compline, Nocturne, the Hours, and the Divine Liturgy are very little different from one day to the next. In Vespers and Matins the differences are to be found both in the invariable parts of the services (several of which are sung instead of read on feast days, with other sung parts being added), and in the variable parts (with greater feasts having more stichera and other hymns than lesser feasts).* What follows is only a brief summary of these differences, some of which will be discussed in more detail, with musical notes, in succeeding chapters.

A. On the most "ordinary" days, in the services which have either *no sign* in the Typicon or the black "three dots not completely enclosed," almost all the invariable parts of the service are read rather than sung, and the variable portions are dominated by the *Octoechos* rather than the *Menaion*†: that is, normally only three or six stichera (at "Lord, I have cried" at Vespers) are sung in honor of the Saint, in addition to the troparion and kontakion, and one canon is read in his honor at Matins; the rest of the variable parts (two canons, many stichera, etc.), are devoted to the commemoration of the day in one of the Eight Tones. Many of the stichera in the *Octoechos,* and several canons, are intended to evoke repentance and contrition, and in general one may say of "ordinary" days that the tone of the service is very subdued and even somber. The rule of fasting is strict on these days if they fall on Wednesday or Friday (no fish or oil), and the "bows" at various parts of the services are full prostrations.

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* An excellent and clear plan of both feast-day and "ordinary" Vespers and Matins (and other services), with the variable parts indicated by capital letters, is to be found in *The Festal Menaion* (Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware), Faber and Faber, 1969, pp. 68-80.

† *Menaion*: The series of 12 volumes (one for each month) containing the services for the fixed feasts (chiefly feasts of Saints). *Octoechos*: the book of the Eight Tones (or basic melodies), containing variable portions of services for each day of the week in an eight-week cycle; on Monday there are services to the Holy Angels, on Tuesday to St. John the Forerunner, on Wednesday and Friday to the Precious Cross and the Most Holy Theotokos, on Thursday to the Holy Apostles and St. Nicholas, and on Saturday to All Saints and the commemoration of the dead.

B. Services with three dots not completely enclosed (red) are those that have a "Great Doxology": that is, the doxology at the end of Matins ("Glory to God in the Highest") is sung instead of read (and the text is a little different); and there are additional stichera in honor of the Saint at the end of Vespers and Matins. The *Octoechos* is used little in these services, there are no prostrations in church, and fasting from oil is relaxed on Wednesdays and Fridays.

C. Feast days marked with a red cross are of Polyeleos rank. On these days the Octoechos is not used at all, and in addition to the features distinguishing the service with the "Great Doxology," the following parts are added: in place of the usual reading from the Psalter at Vespers, "Blessed is the Man" is sung (that is, the first part of the first Kathisma of the Psalter); there are three readings from the Old Testament (or the New Testament Epistles), the "Parables" of the feast; at Matins the Polyeleos (Psalms 135 and 136) is sung, together with the "Magnification" of the feast or Saint (in Russian practice) and followed by a reading from the Gospel; the Canon of the feast or Saint is usually preceded by a Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos.

D. The red cross in a semi-circle is the Sign of a Vigil, when Matins is joined to Vespers and celebrated at night (in some monasteries actually lasting all night).* In addition to the distinguishing characteristics of the Polyeleos service, the Vigil includes a Lity at Vespers with additional stichera in honor of the Saint, and the blessing of wheat, wine, oil, and bread-loaves (the wine and bread are eaten by the faithful during the service); and the Psalm of Introduction at Vespers (Ps. 103) is sung instead of read, together with responses.

E. The red cross in a complete circle is the sign of the "Greater Feasts" — the Twelve Great Feasts, Sundays, and four other feasts: the Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29), the Nativity and the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner (June 24 and August 29), and the patronal feast of a parish or monastery. The services of these feasts are essentially the same as those of the "intermediate" Vigils, but they are served with the maximum possible splendor, brightness, and triumph; on them the eating of fish is permitted even on fast days (save for the Exaltation of the Precious Cross and the Beheading of the Forerunner).

In very few places are all the "rules" of the Typicon regarding feast days kept fully and strictly; but again we must remind ourselves that the Typicon is not intended to be a "strait-jacket" for Orthodox Christians, but rather an inspiration for piety. We

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* In modern Russian practice Vespers and Matins are almost always served together at night, whether or not the service is a Vigil; in modern Greek practice they are very seldom served together, even on Saturday night. Archbishop John Maximovitch, a fervent lover of the Typicon, served the All-night Vigil only on the eves of Sundays and great feasts (Vigils), on other days serving Vespers together with Compline in the evening, and Matins in the morning before the Liturgy—a practice which is closer to the Typicon than either the usual Russian or Greek practice.

will have understood the Typicon's prescriptions for feast-day services, not when we are priding ourselves on "keeping them fully," and certainly not when we remain satisfied merely to judge others for not fulfilling the rules; but rather when we begin to understand and feel the true spirit of the Orthodox feast days, these spiritual "mysteries" (to use the name which St. Gregory the Theologian gives them), when the events and Saints of the heavenly world draw near to earth. In our world of unheard-of coldness, persecution, and soulless worldliness, it is already a miracle that the feasts of God's Church are still celebrated on earth at all; and so when even "two or three" true Orthodox Christians are gathered together to celebrate these mysteries as well as they can, they participate in the authentic life of Christ's Church on earth and are one with all the faithful who are celebrating these feasts throughout the world.

In a number of places in the Typicon, a choice is offered to the local parish or monastery in the celebration of feast days. On some feast days the rubric says: "If the Superior wishes, we serve the Vigil" (and if not, then the Polyeleos); and in the Russian Menaion on many days of the year there are, apart from the service to the "main" Saint of the day, one or more additional services to local Russian Saints. In a place and time (such as Russia in the 19th century) when every feast day, major and minor, was celebrated in many thousands of churches, most bishops and priests were "conservative" in the celebration of these "extra" feasts, especially knowing that the services to the Russian Saints would certainly be performed wherever the relics of these Saints were located. In our own century, however, when the number of Orthodox churches and clergy has been drastically reduced, and the once common practice of daily services has all but died out, a more "radical" attitude toward feast days seems to be called for.

Orthodox "reformers," to be sure, believe that Orthodox worship has been 'inundated by the monthly calendar of saints' days,"* and they preach the "simplification" of the services. Those of a Protestant mentality,who are "oppressed" by the "weight" of Orthodox tradition, including the "complicated services," find such an argument appealing; and indeed we find that in Russia today the Baptist sect makes many converts among those whose ancestors were Orthodox, and in America the "charismatic" movement is changing Orthodox churches into Protestant sects, using Protestant hymns and the "altar call." Are the Orthodox services really "too complicated" for contemporary men?

No, they are not at all too complicated, as following chapters will show; it is rather we who have become too complicated and lazy to understand the moving simplicity and depth of the Orthodox services; for too long we have been idle spectators of them rather than active participants in them. If only Orthodox Christians are still

* The words of Fr. Alexander Schmemann. See the excellent criticism of his "liturgical theology" by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky in *The Orthodox Word,* 1970, no. 6, especially pages 273-277.

capable of waking up and entering into their own priceless heritage, they might see before them an inspiring example of the true Orthodox attitude toward the Divine services in these evil times. In defiance of the "spirit of the times" and the lukewarmness of Orthodox Christians themselves, the "Apostle of the Orthodox Diaspora," Archbishop John Maximovitch, not only celebrated the Divine services every day, no matter where he might be, but he even *multiplied the feast days of the already rich Orthodox calendar*: he celebrated the full Vigil, together with the Lity and the blessing of loaves, for the Russian hierarchs and monks whose services were already in the *Menaion*; sought out, collected, and celebrated the services to other Saints (both Russian and non-Russian) which are not in the *Menaion;* and commissioned the writing of yet other services to Saints who would otherwise be scarcely remembered at all except as names in the calendar. Further, he compared the Greek and Russian service books and himself translated and inserted in the Russian books the troparia of Saints which were not to be found in the latter. In all of this activity (which nowadays would not be regarded as "important" by most bishops) he had one aim in view: to glorify the Saints of God, in whom God is glorified; and thereby also he entered into their glory and inspired others with love and zeal towards them. If one's heart is filled with love for God, he cannot but be filled also with love for God's Saints and for the feasts of His Church in the tradition which has been handed down by the Holy Fathers, and with the desire to glorify Him in these feast days.

The Typicon does not need to say, because it is obvious to anyone who understands the purpose of the Orthodox services, that if one does not have the Typicon and the service books and even a priest, if one is persecuted and in the catacombs (very real possibilities in our century for all Orthodox Christians), then one should keep the Church's feasts as well as one can. Anyone with a little experience in church reading and singing can reconstruct, even in the most catacomb of conditions, at least a little of the splendor and joy which so abound in the Orthodox feast day services.

In the chapters that follow we shall begin to examine some aspects of the Orthodox Church's feast-day hymnody, giving musical notes for some of the simple chants that are so capable of elevating the Orthodox heart and teaching it to *feel* in the Orthodox way. The Orthodox Christian who knows and sings such chants as these will not easily be attracted by worldly Protestant hymns. The Orthodox chants are actually simpler to sing, and are often purely scriptural in content. It is time for Orthodox Christians to become more fully aware of their great inheritance, and thus to know and use these chants as a weapon in the great spiritual battle of our times: the preservation of true Orthodoxy in an apostate world.

Next Issue: Orthodox Feast-day Hymnody: I. "Blessed is the Man."

MATERIALS ON THE LIFE AND MIRACLES
OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVIICH

"The Archbishop's Nina"

THERE ARE SOME people about whom one knows nothing at all, even though one might see them every day, and when they depart to the other world they are soon forgotten and their memory fades away. Such a one was Nina Khmeleva, or "the Archbishop's Nina," as many in Shanghai called her, since she was always in the cathedral and greatly revered Vladika John. Little is known of her. She was completely alone, having no relatives or close ones at all; she had never gotten married, rented a furnished room in a poor part of town, and during her last years was very sick. One remembers that while still in China she went to all the services every day, never missing even one. This labor she continued also in San Francisco; at first she went to the old cathedral, and then to the new. One could often see her at the entrance to the cathedral with a receipt book, collecting money for the building of the new cathedral, and it is said that she collected some thousands of dollars in this way. On Thursdays, even when she became sick herself, she continued to take care of retarded children free of charge. In general, her path in life was a bleak one. She was considered a little simple-minded, a "blessed one" or something like that. A year before her death she began to lose weight quickly, then she said that she had cancer, and soon she was in the hospital.

The third anniversary of Archbishop John's death drew near, in 1969. A week before her death Nina said that "Vladika is coming for me"; but no one attached any significance to her words. She suffered much and swelled up terribly. But three days before her death she became better and said that some kind of elder was standing behind her in the corner of the room, all in white. Three times she saw him and asked him whether he had come for her; but he seemed to shake his head in denial.

Then came the morning of the day of the commemoration of Vladika John's death. In the Sepulchre under the cathedral there was already much movement, the Pontifical Divine Liturgy had begun. At this very time "the Archbishop's Nina" breathed her last in the hospital, and when her death was reported in the Sepulchre, the memorial service was celebrated right after the Liturgy not only for Archbishop John, but also for her. And so it turned out that the first memorial service for her was an "Archbishop's" service. Truly Vladika John took her to himself, and from that time on she has been commemorated in the Sepulchre together with Archbishop John every year on the anniversary of her death.

Reported by T. Blinova

The Life and Ascetic Labor of Our Father, Elder Paisius, Archimandrite of the Holy Moldavian Monasteries of Niamets and Sekoul. Part Ten

THE MONASTERY OF SEKOUL

55. The Turkish War. 56. A part of Moldavia, together with Dragomirna, falls under Roman Catholic rule.

THUS WE remained in the monastery of Dragomirna and in deep peace took sweet enjoyment in the salvation of our souls. But then there arose a frightful storm and mortal fear. Two empires, the Russian and the Turkish, rose up in rage against each other (1768), and then also, by God's allowance, there was another catastrophe and fear of death: plague, together with famine (1771).

Moldavia and Vlachia became the scene of military action, and the inhabitants sought deliverance in flight. The mountains, forests, and monasteries were filled with frightened refugees, fleeing the rage of the Turks and Tatars. The monastery of Dragomirna, being situated in an immense forest in a place difficult of access, was filled with a multitude of refugees. In the first weeks of the Nativity Fast the monastery was so filled with people that it was impossible even to walk through it. The whole surrounding forest was also filled with refugees.

It was a severe, snowy winter. The Elder, seeing the terrible need of the people, of whom many were barefoot and half-naked, sought by all means to ease their condition. He gave to the needy half of the monastery, transferring his whole brotherhood into the other half and placing three, four, and five brothers in a single cell. The large warm refectory he gave over to the simple people, especially the unfortunate, suffering women. The cellarer, the baker and the cook were ordered to give food to all who came and asked. Some took raw provisions and prepared their own food, while others received already-prepared food and bread like the monastery brethren. Bread was baked and food prepared constantly in order to satisfy all those in need.*

These bitter misfortunes having passed swiftly, by the mercy of Christ, and the six-years' war having ended, there was peace between Russia and the

* These two paragraphs are from Chetverikov, vol. I, pp. 109-110.

Ottoman Porte (1774). The Russian armies had crossed the border of Moldavia and put the Turks to flight, and the refugees began to return to their homes, leaving the brethren to return to their former way of life.†

No sooner, however, did the Russian army depart from Moldavia for the homeland, when the Roman Catholic Empress (Austrian Empress Maria Theresa) began to demand of the Turkish Sultan those parts of the Moldavian land which he had promised her (for her help in the war). And so the Germans took the monastery of Dragomirna under their rule. Then our Father shed many tears: he wept bitterly over the devastation of the souls of the brethren and, on the other hand, he was crushed that the monastery should remain under the rule of the Papists, with whom the Eastern Church can never have spiritual peace. Likewise, the brethren also greatly grieved and bitterly wept.

The Moldavian ascetic, Schema-monk John, who knew Blessed Paisius later in Niamets, relates the following concerning this time and Blessed Paisius' attitude towards the Latins.*

"The Elder was so apprehensive about heresies and schisms that all who were converted, whether from sects or from the western Latin heresies, he baptized, a custom which is kept until now by the Moldavian Church. He showed a manifest zeal for piety in that, when he was living with the brethren in the monastery of Dragomirna and, after the war, his monastery together with Bukovina came under the rule of Austria, he left his monastery with all its possessions, movable and immovable, and went to Moldavia, saying to his brethren: 'Fathers and brothers, whoever wishes to obey and follow his Elder, the sinful Paisius, let him come with me; but I give no one a blessing to stay in Dragomirna. For it is impossible to escape heresies while living in the court of the heretics. The Pope of Rome roars like a lion in other kingdoms also and seeks whom he may devour; he gives no peace even in the Turkish kingdom and constantly disturbs and offends the Holy Eastern Church, and how much more in the Austrian realm does he devour the living.' And thus with all his flock he departed for Moldavia. The ruler of Moldavia, seeing his zeal for piety, gave him, instead of one, two monasteries: first Sekoul ("the Beheading"), dedicated to St. John the Forerunner, and later Niamets also, dedicated to the Ascension of the Lord. Elder Paisius constantly instructed the brethren to keep themselves from heresies and schisms,

† This sentence has been added from Chetverikov, I, p. 110.

* Translated from Monk Parthenius, *Travels in Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land* (in Russian), Moscow, 1856.

and in everything to submit to the Most Holy Ecumenical Eastern Patriarchs, and to venerate the zealots of piety: the Most Holy Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Blessed Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus, who both labored against the Pope of Rome."

57. The general lamentation and the calling of Paisius to Sekoul. 58. Transference to the monastery of Sekoul.

AND HARDLY had our Father ceased from weeping and sorrow, consoling the brethren also with hope in God, when there came to him from the Abbot of Sekoul a letter and a gracious invitation for the whole community to come to him. The Elder rejoiced and glorified God, and placing all his care upon the Almighty, he wrote to the pious ruler Gregory Gika and to the Metropolitan, begging the favor that he might be given the monastery of the Beheading of the Precious Head of St. John the Forerunner, which was called Sekoul; and to this he added the letter from the Abbot of Sekoul. And they, greatly sympathizing with the Elder and the community of brethren, gave him the monastery which he had asked for, and confirmed this with a document.

Having received the document, our Father began to concern himself with the transference and commanded the brethren to prepare themselves and to go out as far as the monastery mill, which was on the road; at that time the whole brotherhood in the community numbered 350, including novices not yet tonsured. He left there not a small part of the brethren and two spiritual fathers: one Moldavian, who was to be the Superior, and one Russian, his helper; they were to remain in Dragomirna until the new monastery should be securely and properly bestowed upon the Elder. And he himself went to the church, and there, weeping and lamenting, he prayed to the Lord with bitter tears, as one departing forever from the monastery; and he gave to all the weeping brethren his peace and blessing, consoling them because they should soon be coming to him; and he departed from the church and monastery, going on the road, and he came to the place where the brethren had gathered. The brethren all being together, they began the journey and came to the monastery of Sekoul, giving thanks to God with tears, and settled there in the year 1775, on October 14.

The monastery of Sekoul is located in a narrow place, surrounded by mountains as high as the clouds and by dark, impenetrable forests, so that in the winter the sun seldom shines there; there is never any wind, but it is always still; only beside the monastery there flows a small stream, the sound of whose waters may be heard as they splash against the rocks. The access to the monastery was most rocky and difficult because of the stream which often flows with all its force on both sides of the path, especially when it is full from the rains. But the place was quiet and silent and most beloved of monks

who are zealots according to God. The Elder and the brethren rejoiced greatly over it, and being consoled from their grief over Dragomirna, they gave thanks to God with tears, being willing to endure all other wants and inconveniences for the sake of the beloved silence and quiet. And our Father established in Sekoul the whole order of the common life as it was in the monastery of Dragomirna. And every winter he called everyone into the refectory, instructing them from the divine and patristic writings, in the doing of the commandments of God, in obedience and humility and the fear of God, and in all works and labors pleasing to God.

With the Elder thus laboring over us, the brethren began to come again a little into the good order of Dragomirna by his instruction, struggling and advancing by the grace of Christ and the prayers of the Father. And he rejoiced and with tears gave thanks to God that there had been given him a quiet and silent place according to his desire, and he had not a single thought of seeking out a larger and more convenient monastery; but all the more he rejoiced over the quietness and also the difficulties, which for the sake of Christ he had loved from his youth and had become accustomed to. Wherefore, he instructed and exhorted us also concerning this, and that we should endure manfully and with thanksgiving everything sorrowful for the sake of God's love.

However, the monastery of Sekoul was too confining for such a numerous brotherhood. There were only fourteen cells in the whole monastery. The brethren lived three, four, and five in a single cell and there was still no room for everyone. With the advent of spring new brethren began to come from Dragomirna, and it became yet more confining. The brethren undertook the building of new cells, and everyone was overwhelmed with work. Some were building cells inside the monastery; others were attaching cells to the walls like swallows' nests, as had had to be done also when the Elder had been on Mount Athos; and still others built themselves dwellings outside the monastery in the forest. Three years passed in such cares and labors. During this time about a hundred cells were built, and finally all the brethren who had come from Dragomirna found shelter for themselves.

Desiring to confirm his cœnobitic rule in the new place, Elder Paisius in 1778 appealed to the Metropolitan of Moldavia with the request that he might use the previously confirmed rule in Sekoul. He asked that after his death the new Superior should be chosen by the community of the brethren from among their own number. The new Superior should be chosen from among those who had spent a long time in the most perfect obedience without any fault, and who, through obedience and the cutting off of their own will,

had acquired profound humility, and through humility had been vouchsafed the gift of sound judgment and had acquired the love of Christ equally for all the brethren, as well as the most profound peace, having endured for a prolonged time temptations and offenses, and by constantly reproaching themselves had acquired meekness and simplicity. The one to be chosen should know how to guide the brethren and heal their souls.

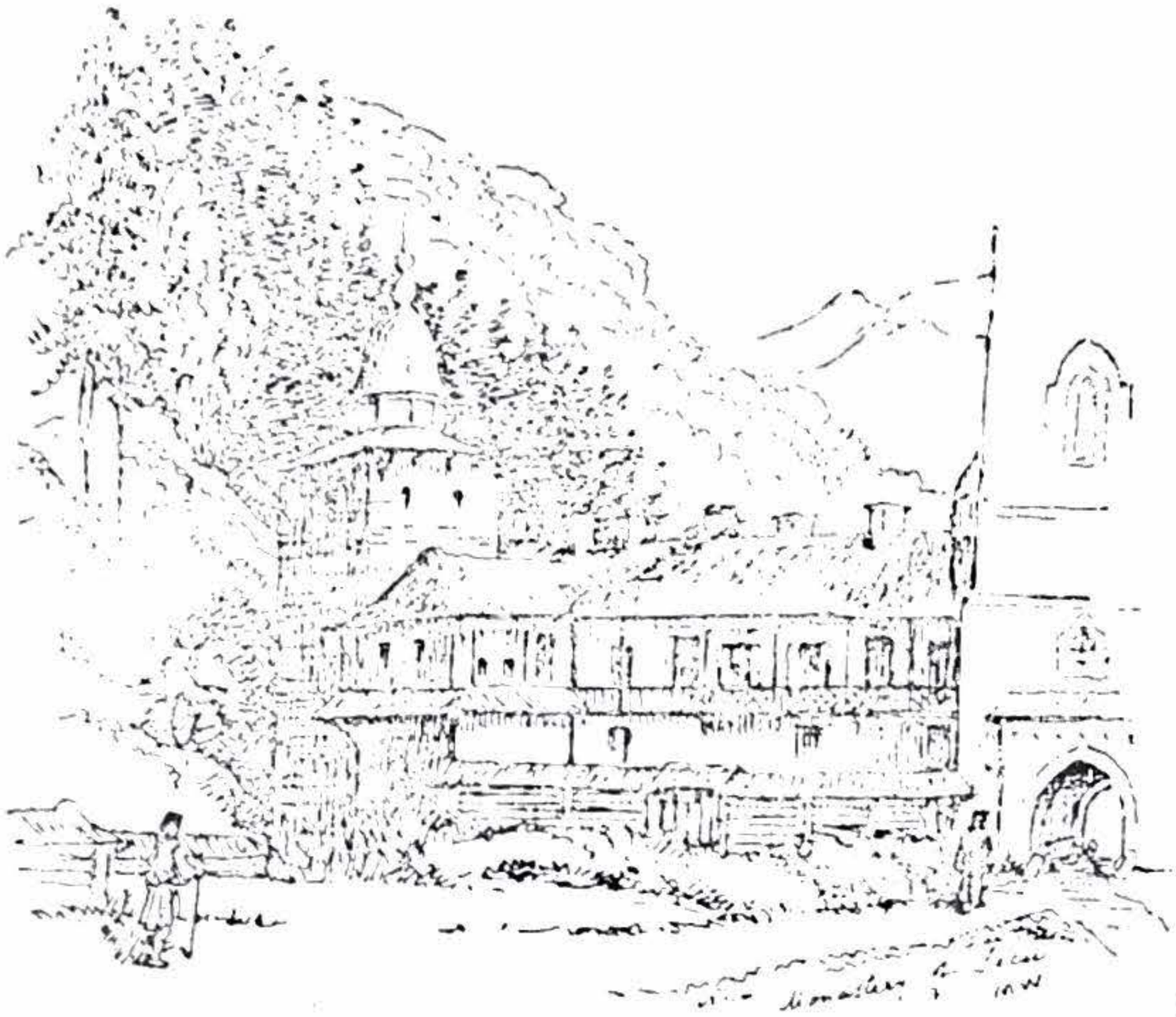
The Patristic labors of the Elder were not interrupted at Sekoul. Here especially his translating activity developed. He intended to establish schools for the instruction of young monks in the Greek language with the aim of drawing them into the work of translating and correcting the Patristic books; but until these should be established, the Elder sent his more capable disciples to Bucharest to study the Greek language there.*

To two of these disciples, Dorotheus and Gerontius, Blessed Paisius wrote a letter revealing his concern for their spiritual welfare in the midst of the world. In Bucharest attempts were made, with the approval of certain bishops, to persuade these disciples, since they were outside their monastery, to eat meat. The Elder wrote them:

"It seems to me that, in accordance with the correct understanding and ordinance of the Holy Orthodox Church, one should not obey even an Angel in this matter. After the Flood the Lord, because of human weakness, permitted the eating of meat, but the order of monastic life corresponds to the life in Paradise, where there was no eating of meat. And although at the beginning of monastic life there was in places a falling away from this order, especially in large cities, nevertheless St. Sabbas the Sanctified confirmed the non-eating of meat; and such has become the general order in all lands. Therefore, one cannot say that the non-eating of meat is only a local custom; and this cannot be left to the free choice of everyone, and it is not true that abstaining from meat harms the health. One should not be put under constraint by those who eat meat, but one must please God rather than men; and those who tempt you, when they see your firmness, will themselves praise you." The Elder referred his disciples to the work of the Elder Basil of Merlopolyany on the monastic tradition of not eating meat,† and reminded them that the brethren of the monastery and the desert-dwellers would be scandalized and grieved if they knew that these brothers had begun to eat meat.**

* These three paragraphs are from Chetverikov, vol. I, pp. 111-112.
† Slavonic text of this work in the Optina Life of Blessed Paisius, pp. 134-157.
** This paragraph is from Chetverikov, vol. II, pp. 45-46.

Next Issue: The Monastery of Niamets.



ENTERING SEKOUL MONASTERY

Blessed John the Moldavian

Inside view of the main church in the courtyard of the Monastery of Sekoul

St. Diodorus of George-hill

(*Continued from page* 187)

Nun Martha Romanov talks to her son, Tsar Michael Theodorovich, about St. Diodorus

The village on the river Kena near which St. Diodorus intended to settle, until he was driven away by the local inhabitants.

mother of Tsar Michael Theodorovich, the nun Martha, about the hermit who had come from the northern coastal lands. She called the Saint, questioned him about his life in the desert, about the place of his struggles, about the visions of which he had been deemed worthy; and she gave him church vessels, icons, books, vestments, bells, and 200 rubles* for the building of the churches and the monastery. Promising to donate more at a later time, she ordered the Elder to come to her and inform her about the various needs of his desert monastery. She commanded the Saint to build his monastery with diligence, and she told her son, the Tsar Michael himself, about the hermit. The Tsar gave him a charter. The cellarer Alexander also supplied the Saint with books, vestments, bells, and money. The merchant Nadeya Svetechnikov gave him books and two bells, and other lovers of Christ donated 300 rubles to the Saint. From Moscow St. Diodorus went to Great Novgorod, to Metropolitan Cyprian, the bishop of his diocese, in order to ask his permission to build a monastery. The cellarer Alexander gave the Saint a letter to the Metropolitan, requesting that the hierarch give his patronage to the hermit. Metropolitan Cyprian received the Saint very kindly, gave him an official document of permission, asked him all about his desert, and came to love the holy Elder. The Metropolitan likewise gave the antimension for the sanctification of the church, some money, various supplies for the return journey, a document which freed the monastery from taxes, and a priest who was to perform Divine services in the monastery. Letting the ascetic go, the Metropolitan promised him his protection and help for the future.

St. Diodorus went joyously back to his beloved wilderness, reflecting on all that had happened and being astonished at how it could be that, having nothing before, he had received everything needful for the building of churches and of the whole monastery. And he rejoiced all the more, seeing with his own eyes his dear wilderness, his humble cell, and his co-dweller Prochorus, who was awaiting the return of the Saint.

Then St. Diodorus began to labor on the building of the monastery. First of all, he turned to the Lord in fervent prayer so that He might show him the place where the main church of the monastery should be built, and he was vouchsafed a vision. He saw coming down from the heavens a great Cross, which came to rest on the mountain. Around the Cross many ravens were flying, which then came down to the mountain and perched on trees, and he heard a voice saying, "May a church of the Most Holy Trinity be erected on this place, and as many birds as you see here, so many will be the monks who will come to you here and will glorify the name of God in this place."

* This sum was quite large, equivalent to 4500 rubles in 1916, and at least several times that amount in present-day dollars — a vivid illustration of the great support given the desert-dwellers by the pious leading nobility.

The Saint informed Prochorus of his vision, and they glorified God. Then they hired carpenters and workers to fell trees for the church building. When the trees were ready, they undertook the building of a wooden church dedicated to the Life-giving Trinity. Previously on George-hill there had been a pagan cemetery. There sacrifices had been offered to the pagan gods, and thus the place was unclean. When they began to build the church, the mountain shook and cries could be heard from within it. The carpenters were frightened and wished to leave their work. Then the Saint performed a service of prayer on the mountain and sprinkled the place with holy water, and the demons fled into George Lake with noise and cries, and then disappeared into the forest. Having built a church dedicated to the Life-giving Trinity, the workmen undertook the building of the church of the Entry of the Mother of God, with a wing dedicated to the Wonderworkers of Solovki. They built cells and surrounded the monastery with a fence. The priest who had been brought by St. Diodorus from Novgorod performed Divine service in the main church. All this happened about the year 1626.

At first there were only three brethren in the newly-built monastery: St. Diodorus, his co-dweller Prochorus, and the priest who had come from Novgorod. But then, one by one, some laymen began to come, and they were tonsured into the monastic rank and labored in the desert monastery with humility and obedience. The Saint himself labored diligently and with love for the brethren, both in the bakery and in the kitchen. He washed the clothing of the brethren and took care of the brethren as a father does his children. He comforted the novices and taught them how to labor, to struggle, and to flee idle talking, by which the enemy often deceives monks.

Once,while standing at prayer, the Saint saw, as it were, a pillar of metal reaching from earth to heaven. From this pillar hooks were hanging, and upon them many monks were being raised up. They were raised up to the heavens, some by the hooks and some by the pillar; the heavens were opened, a great light shone upon those who had been raised, and then the heavens again were closed. Others were raised only half-way up the pillar and then fell to the earth, and so again began their ascent. The vision signified the difficulty and the height of monastic labor.

When many brethren had gathered in the monastery of the Life-giving Trinity, the lack of bread and other food was felt, and there was no place where the monastery could obtain them. The place was far away from the villages of the world, and in the summertime, by reason of the swamps surrounding them, there was not even a road. Only with great labor and out of extreme need did someone get through to the monastery. Famine began, and the brethren began to complain against St. Diodorus, saying: "He has senselessly wasted all his money on building; at one time he built three

churches, made cells, and surrounded the monastery with a fence, and now we have nothing to eat. It would have been better at first to build one church, and the second one afterwards. We cannot bear hunger, and tomorrow morning we will all separate, each one going where he wishes."

The Elder consoled them and said, "Endure, O brethren: God will not abandon us, for He can feed us."

But the brethren did not cease to murmur. The Saint stood at prayer and entreated the Lord not to abandon those who hoped in Him. Then a radiant man appeared before him and said, "Do not be faint-hearted, but strengthen the brethren and remember how many souls the Lord fed in the desert. Do you really think He cannot feed you few? Labor and give thanks to God, and catch fish in the lake."

This vision was repeated twice, but the Saint did not believe his visions and considered them a demonic attack. Having seen the radiant elder for the third time, he tested him, forcing him to read a prayer. The one who had appeared read "Meet It Is," and his face shone with an unearthly light. The Saint fell to the feet of this wondrous elder and asked him, "Who are you, my lord, and why do you have such concern over this place and the brethren, over us sinners? A sweet light illuminates my heart in your presence."

"I was tonsured in the monastery of St. Cyril and am abbot of the monastery of Oshevensk. My name is Alexander. Do not grieve, Diodorus; strengthen the brethren, place your hope in God, labor for Him with fear, and He will feed you."

Then the wonderworker* reminded St. Diodorus of his own words which he had spoken in the previous vision, when he had prophesied the increase of the brethren in the monastery, and became invisible. St. Diodorus glorified God and His Saint, Alexander, and entreated the brethren to go to the lake and fish. The brethren went fishing and caught many fish, which they sold for sixty rubles and thus bought bread and everything necessary.

Another time, the Saint's fellow struggler, Prochorus, heard a voice from the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, before which he was praying, which said, "Do not grieve, but have love among yourselves and labor; God will not abandon you, but He will feed you in this place. Go to the lake and fish." And again the brethren caught many fish.

It happened a third time that the brethren of George-hill were hungry. The monks murmured against the Saint, but he, being meek in soul, consoled the brethren and called upon them to hope only in God, Who will not

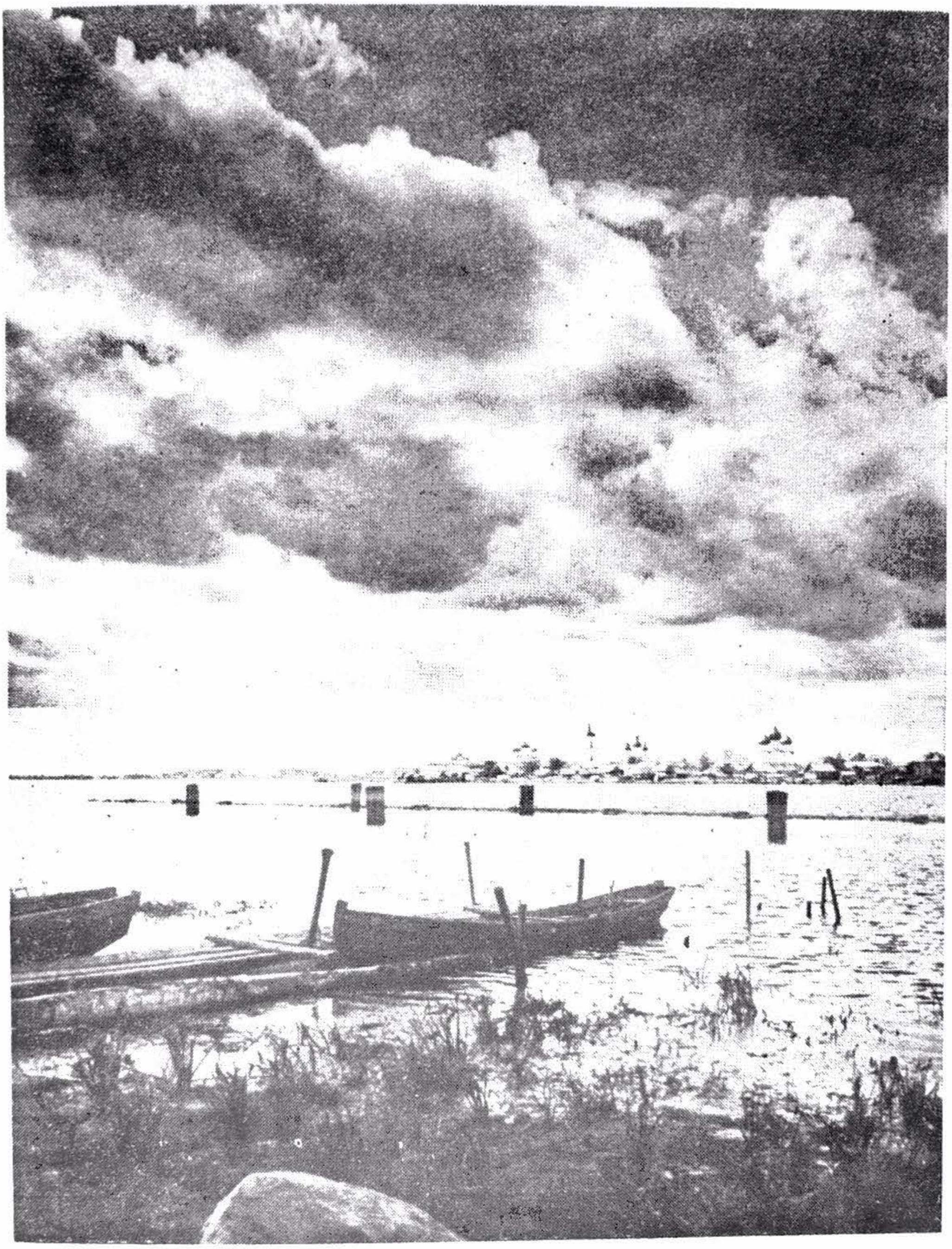
* St. Alexander of Oshevensk and Kargopol (†1479, April 20), founder of Oshevensk Monastery and Orthodox enlightener of the Kargopol region.

force them to endure beyond their strength, but will be merciful. The brethren were calmed; and going out beyond the monastery on obedience, at their work they saw a black fox lying on the ground, and they took it and sold it for eight rubles, with which they bought food.

Up to this time the monastery did not have its own land for tilling, nor its own grain, and therefore the brethren were often hungry. But now that the monastery had increased in size and the brethren had multiplied, the Saint and his fellow strugglers decided to make their own tilling land. They felled trees and ploughed the land.

But new and severe trials were being made ready for the Saint. At that time there was sent to the George-hill Monastery, by order of Patriarch Philaret of All Russia, a disgraced elder, a certain Theodosius. After living for a short time in the monastery, he devised evil against St. Diodorus and decided to kill him. Finding the most suitable time, the evil-doer called the ascetic into the forest and there strove to fulfill his intention. He knocked the Saint to the ground, beat him without mercy, and choked him. Then he dragged the unconscious ascetic under a fallen tree and covered him, thinking that he was dead. But the grace of God helped the Saint; he recovered consciousness and with great labor he came to his own cell. Seeing him, Theodosius became petrified from fear, and coming into the cell of the ascetic, he fell down at his feet and with tears begged his forgiveness, entreating him not to tell about what had happened. The meek ascetic forgave the criminal, not even becoming angry at him , and only remarked, "May God forgive you, my child, for this is not your doing, but the devil's." He promised Theodosius that he would hide his crime from everyone, and he began to love him more than before. But the evil-doer was not at all touched by the Saint's meekness and was not corrected at all.

A little time passed, and Theodosius began to arouse the novices against St. Diodorus, persuading them to leave the monastery. Once the brethren were felling trees, and Theodosius was with them. He carved with an axe in a tree the likeness of St. Diodorus' face, signed his name, and began to beat the image with a whip. Everyone laughed at this. Theodosius continued to arouse the novices, and deceived and persuaded seventeen of them to flee the monastery. Having taken counsel together, they robbed the monastery treasury, took as much of the monastery property as they could carry with them, and having grieved the Saint, they left. The holy Elder was not made bitter by the deprivation of the monastery possessions; he even rejoiced at the departure of the unworthy brethren who were scandalizing other monks by their disobedience. Having hope in God alone, he gave thanks to Him for all sorrows. St. Diodorus received many offences also from



THE TOWN OF KARGOPOL

just as it must have looked in the time of St. Diodorus when he crossed the wide Onega river for the last time before his repose.

Kargopol's Main Cathedral, towering over the quiet Onega River

The snowbound old Kargopol churches on the banks of the frozen river: a forlorn scene of Russia today.

other senseless men, and always he endured without murmuring, praying for those who offended him, instructing them on the way to salvation, and bringing them into love by secret accusations and exhortations. Often he went off by himself, away from the brethren, and lived in silence, praying to the Lord day and night.

Once the Saint was travelling to Great Novgorod to collect alms for the monastery, and on the return journey he stopped in the village of Amdoma, near Lake Onega, with a certain Christ-lover, John, who had a young daughter who, before this, had been promised in marriage. Conversing with the Saint, John said, "Holy Father, I wish to give my daughter in marriage."

Having been silent a little, the Saint remarked, "Slave of God, wait a little, and then act in the way that is pleasing to God." The next day the Saint left for his monastery, and forty days after this the daughter of John died a virgin.

THEN THE BLESSED REPOSE of the Saint of God drew near. The Saint had to travel on monastery business to the city of Kargopol. Before his departure he called the Hieromonk Joasaph and the Elder Prochorus, who first lived with him, and entrusted to them the governance of the monastery, exhorting them to keep the monastery with great care and without weakening. To Prochorus he revealed his impending death. "We will no longer see each other," said the Saint to his fellow desert-dweller. "If it is pleasing to the Lord, we will meet in the future life."

Soon after coming to Kargopol, St. Diodorus became ill, and after receiving Communion of the Holy Mysteries, he departed in peace to the Lord on the 27th day of November, 1633. His body was buried at the parish church of the priest who had given him the Holy Mysteries before his death.

Not for long, however, was the labor-loving body of the ascetic to lie far from his monastery. Two months after the Saint's repose, Prochorus came to Kargopol and took with him the incorrupt body of his Elder. Having brought it to the George-hill Monastery, Prochorus buried it near the church of the Life-giving Trinity, on the southern side.

St. Diodorus left his monastery a written testament through the same priest of Kargopol mentioned above. The Saint commanded the brethren and strongly exhorted them: "Let there be not even a rumor of the keeping of intoxicating beverages in the monastery among the brethren; but be joyful and sober in the spiritual life. And if anyone, being possessed by fearlessness and disdaining this commandment and written testament, shall begin to bring wine to the monastery and to give himself over to drunkenness, I will bring judgment against him before the terrible and unhypocritical Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Lord glorified St. Diodorus by gifts of His grace, by clairvoyance and miracles. The following miracle occurred after the repose of St. Diodorus, in the year 1656. The youth Andrew, who lived in the George-hill Monastery, was incontinent in food and drink and was committing a sexual sin. Not desiring the death of a sinner, the Lord punished Andrew with blindness. He sought help from men, but he found none. Then he came to the grave of St. Diodorus, fervently prayed for healing, wiped his blind eyes with the cover from the grave and with the Saint's cowl, and immediately he recovered his sight. But soon Andrew forgot the mercy of God's Saint and gave himself over in thought to his previous sin. Then the Saint appeared to him in sleep, forbidding him and saying, "Do not sin, do not sin, lest your previous affliction return to you." Andrew remembered the warning of the Saint for only a short time; and then again he gave himself over to his sin. There came upon him then an illness, and he suffered from it until he repented before the Superior and corrected his manner of life.

Once there arose in Andrew the desire to leave the monastery. But St. Diodorus again appeared to him in sleep and said, "Endure in this place and it will be well with you." Andrew remembered the mercy which had been shown to him by the Saint of God, and he feared to leave the monastery, but with joy he promised to endure in it as long as would be pleasing to the Lord; and indeed, later he received the monastic tonsure there.

THE RELICS of St. Diodorus remained in the ground with a reliquary over them in the church of the Life-giving Trinity, which had two side altars, one dedicated to the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos, and the other to his beloved Sts. Sabbatius and Zossimas, founders of Solovki Monastery. There is no record of the Saint's ever having been officially canonized, and it is most likely that his name was entered into the Orthodox Calendar on the basis of his local veneration, as has indeed been the case with most other Orthodox Saints. During the period of monastic persecution, in 1764, the monastery was closed and turned into a parish church, and during the new flowering of Russian monasticism in the 19th century it seems not to have been revived as a monastic settlement. There is no mention at all of its present existence under the soulless Communist rule.

The memory of St. Diodorus is as fragrant today as ever for those who still thirst for true Orthodox spiritual life. Out of love for God's Saints who dwell in the desert, he himself became one of them and bequeathed to us as his testament the fiery freedom of the monastic spirit — achieved through self-renunciation — and the unquenchable thirst for communion with God, which is given to those who hate the world, take up their Cross, and follow Christ our Saviour. Amen.

ORTHODOX BIBLIOGRAPHY

FIFTY SPIRITUAL HOMILIES of St. Macarius the Great, translated by A. J. Mason, with an Introduction by I. M. Kontzevitch. Eastern Orthodox Books, P. O. Box 302, Willits, California, 95490. 1974, 316pp., $6.50.

WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, the translations of the Holy Fathers into English have appeared hitherto in what might be called "heterodox editions": even when the translation itself might be quite satisfactory, it is presented to the English-speaking world with an introduction and footnotes according to Roman Catholic, Protestant, or "scholarly" taste, and one must make many allowances for this heterodox "wisdom" — or simply avoid reading the introductions at all — before approaching the writings of the Holy Fathers themselves. Orthodox Christians who are seriously interested in the Patristic writings have long been used to this approach, but it is all too easy under such conditions to fall prey to certain misconceptions about the Holy Fathers and their writings, and thus to come to them with the wrong attitude, and even to read them quite fruitlessly.

The present book is an excellent presentation, at last, of an Orthodox Patristic text *in an Orthodox edition.* The translation itself, made over fifty years ago, is satisfactory, belonging to that more serious age of scholarship when scholars were more interested in the texts themselves than in proving their fanciful "theories" about them, as is so often the case today; specifically, the translator of the *Spiritual Homilies* rejected the hothouse hypothesis of the "Messalian origin" of this text and accepted St. Macarius as its author, and so he was concerned only to give an accurate translation of it. But while reprinting this text, the publisher has done a further inestimable service for Orthodox readers by printing an introduction to it: the Life of St. Macarius and a theological summary of the doctrine of the Homilies by I. M. Kontzevitch (†1965), an Orthodox Patristic scholar of the highest caliber. Professor Kontzevitch had above all a burning love for the Holy Fathers, and no Father did he know and love more than St. Macarius. His theological summary in particular is a superb and concise account of the path to salvation, which is so well set forth by St. Macarius, beginning with the fall of man, continuing with his struggle for salvation, and ending in the deification of the perfect. After reading such an introduction, one's mind is elevated and one's heart aflame to learn from the God-inspired words of such a great Saint. *This* is the true function of Patristic scholarship, and not the idle rationalistic criticism that usually passes under that name.

One can only welcome this new edition from a publisher who has brought out an impressive and varied selection of Orthodox books just in the last year or so, including the *Ladder* of St. John Climacus (a reprint of the last Faber & Faber edition), the *Iconpainter's Handbook* (with text in English), the *Letters of Starets Macarius* of Optina, *Lives of the Serbian Saints*, and the *Orthodox Doctrine* of Metropolitan Platon of Moscow.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete
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